

REMARKS

Claims 11-13 and 15-26 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Des Marais (USP 3,994,298).

Claims 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Des Marais in view of Richter et al.

Claims 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Richter et al, as evidenced by Merten et al.

The Examiner states that claims 14-16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended independent claim 11 to recite the subject matter of claim 14 and claim 14 has been cancelled. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections based on Des Marais, Des Marais in view of Richter et al and Richter et al, as evidenced by Merten et al are moot and is requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

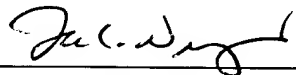
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER



Lee C. Wright
Registration No. 41,441

Date: September 17, 2003